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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGE TO NON-TRADITIONAL CALENDAR PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

The Commission's current Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility policy requires that approved Non-Traditional Programs in which a student may receive South Carolina Tuition Grants assistance must:

1. Be offered by a college that is already approved for participation in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program; and,
2. the Non-Traditional Calendar Program must be fully accredited for awarding of a degree and,
3. begin classes no sooner than 10 working days prior to the beginning of the college's traditional fall semester and no later than 10 working days after the beginning of the college's traditional fall semester, and end no earlier than 10 working days prior to the end of the college's traditional spring semester and no later than 10 working days after the end of college's traditional spring semester (Tuition Grants may not be used for programs of instruction offered during the summer); and,
4. teach sufficient courses to enable a student to obtain a baccalaureate degree within four years; and,
5. regardless of the program structure, teach sufficient courses so that the student has the opportunity to earn a minimum of 24 semester hours during the timeframe outlined in (3) that runs parallel to the college's traditional academic year.

Commission staff have reviewed the structure of currently approved non-traditional programs and find that the "10 working days" requirement often puts a strain and a concern on the continued eligibility of certain programs based on the approved academic calendar of the institution.

The Staff is of the opinion that the 10-day requirement (item 3) should be reevaluated and updated to align with Commission's defined Academic Calendar for the Tuition Grants Program, which spans from August through May. This change would allow for non-traditional programs that begin in August, alongside the institution's traditional Fall semester, and end in May, alongside the institution's traditional Spring semester to meet eligibility criteria more broadly than the current 10-day restriction.

**The staff recommends that the Commission consider the following change to the Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility Policy:**

**Effective with the 2023-2024 Academic Year, the requirements of Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility should be:**

1. Be offered by a college that is already approved for participation in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program; and,
2. the Non-Traditional Calendar Program must be fully accredited for awarding of a degree and,
3. **begin classes no sooner than the first day of August and end classes no later than the last day of May, to coincide with the traditional fall and spring semesters; and,**
4. teach sufficient courses to enable a student to obtain a baccalaureate degree within four years; and,
5. regardless of the program structure, teach sufficient courses so that the student has the opportunity to earn a minimum of 24 semester hours during the timeframe outlined in (3) that runs parallel to the college's traditional academic year.

**A vote by the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission is required to change the currently approved Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility Requirements.**